

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 14, 26, 27 and 32 as follows, and please cancel claims 16-18 without prejudice to continued prosecution. The claims and their status are shown below.

1-13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing solidified maltitol, wherein said process comprises the following steps:

a) turbulating and simultaneously drying a quantity A of maltitol powder and a quantity B of a maltitol-containing syrup in a stream of gas ~~[[air]]~~ in a fluid bed at a temperature between about 20°C and a second temperature at which the maltitol powder is still solid, wherein the quantity A is greater than or equal to the quantity B so as to obtain a coated, granulated maltitol product, wherein the gas is nitrogen and/or air and the temperature of the gas is from 80°C to 95°C,

~~b) drying the coated maltitol product in a fluid bed to obtain a granulated maltitol product;~~

b ~~[[c]]~~) reducing the particle size of the coated, granulated maltitol product to produce solidified maltitol, wherein the content of maltitol in the solidified maltitol is from about 92% w/w to about 97% w/w based on dry substance, and

c ~~[[d]]~~) recycling all or a portion of said solidified maltitol into step a) as powder of maltitol.

15-19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein the maltitol-containing syrup comprises a dry substance content of from about 40% to about 80% and a maltitol content of equal to or greater than about 70% based on dry substance.

21. (Previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein the temperature in step a) is between about 50°C and said second temperature.

22. (Previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein the temperature in step a) is between about 70°C and said second temperature.

23. (Previously presented) The process of claim 14, wherein the temperature in step a) is between about 80°C and said second temperature.

24-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 14, wherein the content of maltitol in the solidified maltitol of step h ~~[[c]]~~ is from about 94% w/w to about 96% w/w based on dry substance.

27. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing solidified maltitol, wherein said process comprises the following steps:

a) loading maltitol powder into a fluid bed basket;

b) providing a stream of gas having an inlet temperature between about 80°C and the melting temperature of the maltitol powder;

c) adding a maltitol syrup into a feeding basket of the fluid bed, wherein said maltitol syrup has a dry substance content of about 70%;

d) spraying and simultaneously drying said maltitol syrup onto the maltitol powder using said stream of gas to obtain a coated, granulated maltitol product having a moisture content of less than about 1%, wherein the maltitol syrup is sprayed onto the maltitol powder through a nozzle using said gas;

~~e) drying said coated maltitol product to obtain a granulated maltitol product having a moisture content of less than about 1%;~~

g ~~[[f]]~~ milling said granulated maltitol product to obtain solidified maltitol; and

f ~~[[g]]~~ recycling a part or all of said solidified maltitol into step a), wherein step f ~~[[g]]~~ is repeated until the solidified maltitol obtained in step g ~~[[f]]~~ has a maltitol content of from about 92 % (w/w) to about 97% (w/w).

28. (Previously presented) The process of claim 27, wherein said gas is air.

29. (Previously presented) The process of claim 27, wherein said gas inlet temperature is between about 90°C and about 95°C.

30. (Previously presented) The process of claim 27, wherein said granulated maltitol product has a moisture content of less than about 0.5%.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 27, wherein step f ~~[[g]]~~ is repeated until the solidified maltitol obtained in step g ~~[[f]]~~ has a maltitol content of from about 95.5% to about 96.5%.

33. (Previously presented) Solidified maltitol made by the process of claim 14.

34. (Previously presented) A feed, food, pharma or cosmetic product comprising the solidified maltitol of claim 33.

35. (Previously presented) The product of claim 34, wherein said food product is selected from the group consisting of a bakery product, a tablet, a confectionery, chewing gum, and a coated edible core.

36. (Previously presented) The tablet of claim 35, wherein said tablet comprises between about 2% and about 100% of the solidified maltitol of claim 33.

37. (Previously presented) A bakery product comprising flour, fat, and a sweetening agent, wherein the sweetening agent comprises from about 25% to about 100% of the solidified maltitol of claim 33.